

# Barrier Management Key to Compliance

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**A significant concern in the physical environment** of health care facilities is the continued occurrence of survey findings regarding the Environment of Care and Life Safety Chapters in the Joint Commission's Hospital Accreditation Program. Eight of the top 10 most often scored standards represent a total of 137 elements of performances within these chapters.

To improve the awareness of one of the top cited issues—barrier management—ASHE has collaborated with the Joint Commission, Underwriters Laboratory, and the Firestop Contractors International Association in the development of the Barrier Management Symposium—a one-and-a-half-day symposium that addresses the design, installation, inspection and maintenance of barrier systems.

Fire and smoke barriers installed in buildings are living elements of the structure. They protect healthcare building occupants and are used for horizontal evacuation of compromised areas. These barriers and their features form effective compartmentation that allows for defend-in-place strategies. Fire and smoke barrier management is critical to maximize patient safety and property protection; minimize death and injury; and facilitate entry and travel in structures for emergency responders.

The Barrier Management Symposium focuses on the proper DIIM—design, installation, inspection, and maintenance—of fire and smoke barrier systems, which ensures that the defend-in-place practice in healthcare facilities works when it is called on.

The Barrier Management Symposium program educates attendees about the testing that

qualifies products for use; code requirements for installation and inspection; proper design applications of systems, and management and maintenance for ongoing reliability of the installed fire resistance rated and smoke resistant products. These features become a reliable system when they are properly “DIIM”-ed.

The Symposium is designed to increase the awareness of the healthcare engineering professional of the value of barrier management systems, as well as their understanding of the underlying keys to long-term success. To date, more than 650 professionals have attended the five symposiums, which have been delivered on an ASHE regional basis.

An additional four symposiums are being scheduled and planned for 2015, and the final regional symposium is anticipated at the beginning of 2016. The symposium has gained popularity and may have had an effect on the reduction of findings over the last year.

During 2014, a decrease in the amount of citations within the relative Life Safety Standards has helped to move standards related to barrier management further down on the Top 10 list. There is still a need to increase awareness of this issue on a local chapter level.

A single-day chapter-level program is expected to be available toward the end of 2015. To coordinate a regional or chapter presentation, please contact me, Jonathan Flannery, ASHE Senior Associate Director of Advocacy, at [jflannery@aha.org](mailto:jflannery@aha.org). ■

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